

Rockford Historic Preservation Commission

February 3, 2009 – 6:00 PM
Conference Room B
Rockford City Hall

Present: Laura Bachelder, Doug Mark, Maureen Flanagan, Sally Faber

Absent Tom Graceffa, David Hagney, Mark McInnis

Staff: Ginny Gregory, Arianne Clarke, Reid Montgomery, Wendy Williams (Public Works)

Others: Joanna Dowling, Diane Koch, Loyd Koch, Gary Anderson, Chandler Anderson

Public Hearing for the Application to create Peacock Brewery Historic District

Laura Bachelder opened the public hearing at 6:02p.m. She introduced Gary Anderson, author of the application, who gave a synopsis of the history of the Peacock Brewery.

Gary proposed to designate the original brewery and the Brew master's house as a historic district. He indicated that the Cellusuede building, which extends northward from the house, should not be included in the historic district. He passed around a binder containing historical information collected by Sarah Bell's father. Gary explained most of the historical information was gathered from articles, looking at the Sanborn maps as well as reviewing the abstracts from the Koch family, who are the current owners of the brewery.

Gary explained the brewery started in 1849 in the Brew master's house on the corner of Prairie Avenue and Madison Street. Gary believed the Brew master's house was built in 1845-1846. He stated the Brew master's house had an addition at the back that was built around the same time as the original house. There were subsequent additions added on that Gary believed the original owners, the Peacock family, created in 1902 with the result that the house evolved with the main brewery itself. The brewery building started in 1857 when Mr. Peacock expanded his brewery out of the house. Mr. Peacock subsequently added onto the building from the north end to the south end over the course of a year, but Gary was unable to pinpoint the dates the additions were made. There was a section that was wide open until 1899 when the larger portion of the building and the tower were added on. The area between those buildings was later filled in.

There was a substantial change in the building in 1919. Prohibition came in 1917 and pretty much wiped out the brewery, so in 1919 the same owners under a different name repurposed the buildings as Rockford Warehouse Storage. At that time additional floors were added leaving the old foundations and parts of the first floor. The roofs were removed and more additions were made to the building. The tower itself became storage and one floor was added when it was changed into a warehouse. Fur storage and vaults were also added in the building. After 1919 there weren't too many other changes or modifications to the building although there were some smaller additions that occurred but none that survived.

Gary believes both buildings are a prime example of how architecture evolved for industrial use. He stated the uniqueness of the building resides in how it maintained its integrity through all those years and modifications. The property also represents important elements of Rockford's social and political history. The Women's Temperance Union played a large role in Rockford's

history as well as the brewery. Unions also played a large role in eventually closing the brewery. Labor issues were big at the time by way of union vs. non-union and how the brewery reinvented itself as a warehouse.

Maureen Flanagan asked if Gary planned on turning the property back into a brew house. Gary replied they were, as well as mixed-use commercial, residential and retail. The retail portion would be multiple restaurants that front along the river.

With no further comments or questions, Ald. Mark made a **MOTION** to close the hearing. The motion was seconded by Maureen Flanagan and **CARRIED** by a vote of 4-0. The public hearing was adjourned at 6:09 p.m.

Meeting of the Rockford Historic Preservation Commission

Approval of Minutes

Maureen Flanagan made a **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the minutes for the meeting of January 6, 2009 as submitted. The motion was seconded by Sally Faber and **CARRIED** by a vote of 4-0.

OLD BUSINESS

Certificate of Appropriateness – Lighting on Kishwaukee Street

Wendy Williams, Project Manager from the Public Works Department, explained the plans for lighting Kishwaukee Street have been reviewed again with the suggestions made by the members present at last month's Historic Preservation Commission. She stated the two issues of concern were whether any of the proposed lighting could be moved to the east side of the street and whether the three existing Wellsbach decorative lighting fixtures, originally proposed to be removed in favor of newer and brighter lighting, could remain.

Wendy stated there were only two newer lights that could possibly be moved to the east side of the street due to lack of easement on the east side.

Wendy also reviewed the option of leaving the current Wellsbach lighting where it was and stated there were two reasons the three Wellsbach lights had been proposed to be removed – redundancy of lighting since the newer lights would be much brighter, and the parts from the Wellsbach lights that could be used in other Wellsbach light fixtures in Haight Village since this particular type of fixture is no longer produced. She stated the existing Wellsbach light that was off the right-of-way could remain. She mentioned the Wellsbach light near the cul-de-sac could remain, however the City had to place a newer light there. Having two lights within a few feet of each other would look strange.

Maureen asked if the Wellsbach lights would be moved to the east side or left where they are. Wendy replied the decorative luminaries would either be left where they are or removed completely.

Maureen asked if the existing lights would then be next to the newer lighting. Wendy replied it would if that was what this Commission decided. The newer lights would also be black with one light and banner arms.

Doug asked what Mark McInnis wanted done with the lighting. Wendy replied he did not want the Wellsbach lights removed as he believed they added to the historic value of the neighborhood. Laura Bachelder stated the Haight Village neighborhood worked hard to get those lights installed. Ginny Gregory stated she had heard varying opinions from residents in Haight Village regarding the decorative lighting.

Maureen asked if Mark had seen the revised aerial drawings. Ginny stated he received them the same time as the other Commission members.

Sally believed having a Wellsbach light next to a newer light would look odd. Laura suggested removing the Wellsbach light from the cul-de-sac.

Doug asked how many Wellsbach lights would be affected. Wendy replied there were three.

After reviewing the plans, Doug suggested moving the Wellsbach light that was at the end of the cul-de-sac to the southern border of the cul-de-sac, thereby making room for the newer light and keeping the original lighting. Wendy wasn't sure if the southern border was privately owned but stated she would look into it. If it is possible to move that light, they will do it.

Maureen Flanagan made a **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the Certificate of Appropriateness for lighting on Kishwaukee Street as submitted for this meeting with the modification of leaving all the original Wellsbach lighting except the one near the cul-de-sac, which should be moved to the southern boundary of the cul-de-sac. The motion was second by Sally Faber and **CARRIED** by a vote of **4-0**.

NEW BUSINESS

Application to create the Peacock Brewery Historic District

Doug Mark made the following comments regarding the application to create Peacock Brewery Historic District:

It [Peacock Brewery] does have definable boundaries in the form of the existing brewery building and the additions to the Brewmaster's house and the two parking areas to be included. It [Peacock Brewery] does exemplify a sense of history with the brewery building and the Brewmaster's house. The structures included in the proposed district do hold significance for the City and the history of what the building was as it existed and [has] kept its integrity. It does have a sense of time and place starting in the 1840s as a brewery moving through that history as an enclosing with the Brewmaster's house added in 1902 up until this day, transforming into a warehouse yet keeping its unique character. It does exemplify the cultural, social, economic, political or architectural history of the City as it maintained that integrity. The original business as it transpired in the history of the temperance played a large role in the closing of the brewery and some labor issues that were certainly a part of the history of this city and of

the nation and that it does distinguish characteristics of an architectural style which is inherently valuable for the study of the period.

Doug Mark made a **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the application to create the Peacock Brewery Historic District based on the above statement. The motion was seconded by Maureen Flanagan and **CARRIED** by a vote of **4-0**.

Ginny Gregory stated the next step would be a recommendation to approve the application to the Code and Regulation Committee of City Council. If the Code and Regulation Committee passes along the recommendation, it will go to the full City Council. To be able to use tax credits on redevelopment of the property, the new district would need to be certified by the National Park Service.

Certificate of Appropriateness, 813 North Main Street

Chandler Anderson explained there is currently a large plate glass double-hung window overlooking the back porch at 813 North Main. He believed there was a safety issue as the window was very old and could easily break. He explained the owners of the property [Burpee Museum of Natural History] wanted to remove the window and replace it with a full transom with French doors modeled after the front door of the property. He stated the proposed doors would be an exact replica of the front door and allow the property owners to walk out onto their porch through the room. They would also like to install two new full-view wood storm doors on the north side of the building for security purposes. These would be constructed of wood with laminated glass. There would be no exterior hardware on the storm doors.

Maureen asked if the east side door was a storm door. Chandler replied it was not and mentioned the owners plan to match the details of the front door. He further stated the owners would not be changing the size of the opening and would leave the brick molding on the outside.

Laura asked if there were any previous pictures showing whether the window had always been that way. Chandler replied he didn't have any pictures with him, just the plan, but the window had always been there.

Sally asked if Ginny had any photographs of the back. Ginny located a plan showing the window but no photos.

Sally asked Chandler to describe where the window was currently in proximity to the house. Chandler explained one would walk through the front door and make their way to the back hall and turn left. The window was there.

Laura asked what path the owners were currently using to get to the patio. Chandler reviewed the plan and thought they were accessing it from a side hallway, but wasn't certain. She expressed her satisfaction that the owners wanted to use a design element from their house in their proposed door.

Sally Faber reviewed Design Guidelines for Historic Properties in Rockford. The guideline regarding windows stated, "Retain the original door openings and windows." She believed the proposed change did not match the guidelines.

Maureen asked how often the window was opened. Chandler didn't believe the window could be opened. He stated the owners would like access through the room to the patio.

Ginny believed the guidelines were keyed to the opening size, which wasn't being changed in this situation. Doug Mark and Maureen also agreed. Chandler explained since the opening wasn't being changed, a window could always be added back to the property.

Maureen asked if the room was being used currently. Chandler wasn't sure. Sally stated the room is being modified for receptions.

Maureen believed the design guideline, "Retain original door and window openings," referred to the dimensions of the opening, not whether the opening carried a door or window. Laura stated the guidelines also stated, "Replacement windows should be the same style and detail as the original." Maureen did not believe that counted as the owner wasn't asking to replace the window with a window.

Sally stated she was supportive of the proposed changes, but the guidelines don't seem to support the change.

Doug Mark made a **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the certificate of Appropriateness for 813 North Main Street. The motion was seconded by Maureen Flanagan and **CARRIED** by a vote of 2-1. Sally Faber voted no and Laura Bachelder abstained.

Violation Notice

Ginny reported she gave the owner of the properties at 401-417 Kishwaukee Street until March to respond as she did not get her letter to him until last week. She explained the letter stated the owner needed to bring in a timetable to the next Historic Preservation Commission meeting showing when work outlined in the notice would be completed. If he fails to do that, his case will be referred to the Legal Department and will go to court. She mentioned the case is also being processed by the City Code Enforcement section. She believed the case would be going to Code Hearing in March or April.

Ginny stated some of the work that needs to be done cannot be done now due to the weather. She mentioned the property was painted as high up as a person can reach without a ladder. Ginny explained the cover letter she sent the owner specified the only items being cited by the HPC that are due solely by the properties' historic district status are the metal door and the satellite dish. Everything else in the notice falls under the preservation ordinance requirement for minimum maintenance and involves items that would be violations in any part of the City.

Doug asked when the owner was first cited. Ginny replied it was about a year ago. Doug asked when it was going to code hearing. Ginny replied in March or April. Doug believed it wasn't appropriate to have the owner appear here if he was going to appear at code hearing.

Ginny stated her photographs showed two smaller houses near the railroad that have limestone foundations the same as the larger homes nearby, so they were probably the same vintage. Fortunately most of the houses were vacant.

Staff report

Ginny reported on the antenna issue from 1922 7th Street, the old National Lock building. The Commission had made a recommendation to IHPA that the antenna be placed in a less visible area, away from the clock tower. IHPA responded with a request to put the antenna on the water tower rather than the clock tower. Because the Commission had made it clear previously that the clock tower was the most significant feature on the building, she went ahead and signed off on the proposal to place the new antenna on the water tower.

Ginny passed around a sample copy of the booklet done under our 2008 grant to show the economic impact of local designation. She indicated there were a couple of tables in the wrong place, but for the most part the sample was how the final copy would look. Rockford Area Economic Development Council formatted the booklet at no cost to us.

Sally asked the time frame for printing the booklets. Ginny indicated she needed to collect cost estimates, make some changes, and find out how long the State will take to reimburse the money.

Ginny reported she was recently at a board meeting for Illinois Association of Historic Preservation Commissions (IAHPC). One of the questions asked was whether Commission members would prefer receiving a hard copy of their newsletter in the mail or getting a digital version of the newsletter by e-mail. She made a note of those who wanted e-mailed newsletters.

Ginny stated IAHPC will be holding a Certified Local Government Workshop in September. She asked Commission members to contact her if there is any topic they would find useful at the workshop.

Ginny stated that IAHPC is also working on a manual for members of preservation commissions across the state. She invited Commission members to review the resources from the manual at www.iahpc.org.

Ginny believed she had e-mailed the Commission members regarding a court case decision in Chicago. The decision declared the Chicago historic preservation ordinance unconstitutional. Ginny sent the decision to John Giliberti in Rockford's Legal Department for review. John believed the ruling did not affect Rockford at this point. Chicago's ordinance had delegated legislative authority to their Landmarks Commission, which is not allowed in the State of Illinois constitution. Ginny explained the Rockford Ordinance was different from the Chicago ordinance in that if Chicago City Council does not act on an historic district application within 365 days, if the Chicago Historic Preservation Commission had approved the application, the application does become a district. The Rockford ordinance states if City Council does not act on the application within a specified time, it is denied. The other argument in the decision was that some of the criteria are a little vague. Chicago plans on appealing the ruling.

Maureen asked since the case was in appeal could Chicago do anything. Ginny wasn't certain. Doug believed it was in the best interest of both sides not to do anything as the Court could reverse any actions. Laura believed the ruling reinforces the need to be very specific in any recommendations this Commission makes.

Ginny reported there were dinner tickets available for \$500 each for Landmarks Illinois.

Ginny introduced Joanna Dowling, a new resident to Poplar Grove who has recently completed her degree in historic preservation at the Art Institute of Chicago and who does historical

research and consulting. She wants to become more active in the preservation community in the Rockford area. Joanna has done nomination writing, architectural research, tabs documentation, and documentation of recent past resources. She passed around her business cards.

Laura informed Joanna she was the Curator of Collections at the Midway Museum Center and invited her to stop by. Ginny invited her to review the inventory at Barber Colman.

Meeting adjourned at 7:04p.m.